

Random Encounters

The Edge Maze

By Jeff Quick



The Edge Maze

Active trees, wandering undead, and shadow denizens are troublesome enough to those intrepid few who would enter the Twisted Wood. But to complicate matters, Szorlog the treant has moved and shaped the trees on the edges of the forest to create thick-walled and canopied corridors, presenting a maze to any who would enter. The tree walls of the maze are far more durable than normal trees, and they radiate strong Transmutation magic at all times. The wood within the maze is never less than 1 foot thick, though it is frequently thicker. A 1-foot-thick section of these walls has a Break DC of 35, Hardness 10, 120 hit points (in a 10-foot by 10-foot section), and a Climb DC of 18. In most places, the lower canopy begins 30 feet from the ground, although in different areas it can be higher or lower.



The "edge maze" itself is dark, and several different kinds of undead and carnivorous plants lurk within it. Further, the treant has rigged numerous traps to weaken and dissuade intruders who would attempt to eradicate the evil beneath the forest.

Some of the traps include the following:

Pit Trap

The classic pit trap is hidden beneath root systems that look solid, but actually fall away when more than 30 pounds are placed on them, as if someone had stepped onto a thin branch. Some pit traps in the edge maze are just deadfalls, while others have carnivorous plants at the bottom. Huge or Gargantuan assassin vines sometimes line the bottom and sides of deeper pits.

Root-Covered Pit Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex saving throw (DC 25) avoids; 70 ft. deep (7d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-foot squares); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 18).

Twig Darts

At the end of a long passage in the maze, trees are grown with their twigs sharpened and aimed down the passage. When a creature moves within the twigs' range without tripping the hidden switch, they shoot down the passage. The twigs grow again and the trap is reset in an hour. Deadlier versions of twig darts are coated with poison.

Twig Darts: CR 6 (nonpoisonous); magic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 20); Atk +15 ranged (1d4+3, dart); multiple targets (2d4 darts per target in a 10 ft by 10 ft. area); Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 28).

Spore Clouds

Bulbs full of noxious spores are delicately planted behind a thin layer of foliage. When anything heavier than 15 pounds steps on an attached air bladder hidden in the ground cover, the spores shoot out, covering a large section of the passageway.

Spore Cloud Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; gas; never-miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (spore seed, Fortitude save [DC 20] resists, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con); multiple targets (all targets in a 15 ft. by 15 ft. area); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 20).

Sticky Sap

This sap is like a stronger, naturally occurring tanglefoot bag. Only visible as a faint sheen when light hits it, it is easy to overlook. All by itself, a sticky sap trap is merely annoying to a seasoned adventurer. It slows them down, but hardly stops them. Sticky sap traps used in combination with another trap (or a creature) can be much more dangerous. Sticky sap traps can also be trouble for the unseasoned nonadventurer that PCs might need to rescue from the maze. Note that sticky sap traps can show up anywhere: on the ground, on tree trunks, or slathered onto skeletons and zombies (providing an uncomfortable surprise for the group's monk.)

Sticky Sap Trap: CR 2, mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; entanglement (Strength or Escape Artist check [DC 22]); multiple-target (all who touch); Search (DC 26); Disable Device (DC 26).

Falling Trees

Some trees within the edge maze are dead and rigged to fall at the slightest provocation. Stepping on their dead roots (which spread throughout the

passageways of the maze) is all it takes to bring several of the intertwined trees down on an unsuspecting occupant in the maze.

Falling Trees: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +20 melee (8d6, tree trunks); multiple targets (all targets in a 10 ft. by 30 ft. area); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 20).

Snare Spell

Every couple of weeks, Szorlog spends as many spell slots as possible to cast the *snare* spell on various loops of vine in the edge maze. He places them in spots where he thinks trespassers would be most interested in standing: near exits and by corpses of previous interlopers. He also places them in clumps of three or four at the same place to catch small groups of trespassers at the same time.

Snare Trap: CR 4; spell; spell trigger (touch); no reset; *snare* effect (entangle plus 1d6 points of damage; no save); Search (DC 23); Disable Device (DC 28).

Bringing the Parts Together

Should the PCs make it past the other hazards outside the maze and still wish to enter the wood, they may find more than they bargained for in the maze. If they do succeed in winning their way past the traps and creatures within the maze, they may get a glimpse of the master of the wood. Will they defeat it, or will they seek some rest before taking on such a strong foe? If they do the latter, will they find more challenges when they seek to enter the wood again? If they defeat the treant master of the wood, do the PCs find out what great evil it was guarding?

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